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MAGIC, CATEGORIZATION AND FOLK METAPHYSICS. TOWARDS COGNITIVE THEORY OF MAGIC

JAN KAJFOSZ

Abstract: It is the aim of this work to interpret magical thinking as a strong tendency towards categorization, towards simplification of an infinitely diverse reality and of its modifications, and its reduction to a limited number of static prototypes. In magical thinking similitude and contact (adjacency) are not only crucial principles of the human cognition; moreover they have their ontological dimensions: they direct the course of the world. Numerous examples of human conduct that are motivated by the laws of magic can be found not only in systems and their elements mentioned in canonical studies of magic (Frazer, Mauss) or in Eliade's phenomenology of religion, but also in texts concerning European medieval and folk culture (Gurevich) or contemporary popular culture (astrology, prophecies etc.). Different phenomena of magical thinking like recurring time, imitations of extra-mundane models or of the past deeds can be described and explained by means of cognitivism. Various forms of popular metaphysics are also based on the tendency towards categorization. It is the tendency to eliminate everything particular and variable, and to inspell what is general and certain. Magical thinking does not acknowledge coincidence or probability, since everything is considered here necessary and can be instantly explained.

Key words: Anthropology, Anthropology of religion, Cognition, Popular culture, Collective memory, Magic.

A key to the definition of what is magic can be found in the elementary principles that drive human cognition. These principles can be summarized in the categories of difference and similitude on the one hand, and of contact (affinity) on the other. The cognitive meaning of these categories is rather apparent in the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure. According de Saussure, difference is essential to any linguistic system and it is inevitably interlinked with similitude. Both, difference and similitude thus function as two sides of the same coin. In the linguistic paradigm, validity of a word (in a sense of *valeur*) does not arise from

any difference; it only arises from the difference between the most similar words (Saussure 1996: 143–144). In the linguistic syntax, the meaning of a word is determined by a binding connection (habitualized associative affinity) between two categories (Saussure 1996: 150–156; Miceli 1991: 166).

The cognitive meaning of similitude and contact is crucial also for the semiotic theory of Ch. S. Peirce who distinguishes among three types of signs: icon, index, and symbol. Iconic sign refers to a given phenomenon through **similarity** (i.e. photography referring to a photographed object), whereas index sign refers to it through correlation and **connection**, which is usually determined by a causal-effective relationship (i.e. smoke referring to the fire) and is reflected in a habitual and associative connection between the index sign and its object. The symbolic sign¹ is an unmotivated entity that represents a phenomenon based on habitual and random consensus (Sebeok 2000: 90–109). If we focus exclusively on the motivated iconic and index signs, we could argue that the former one is constituted through **similitude** whereas the latter through **contact** (simultaneous occurrence).

The cognitive relevance of similitude and of contact is apparent also in the theory of metaphor and metonymy; in the former, the shift of meaning is due to the similitude whereas the other it is due to the contact (Guiraud 1976: 36). In cognitive sciences, metaphor and metonymy are one of the fundamental mechanisms of human cognition that operate as elementary principles of categorization (Lakoff 2006: 87, 102). In the process of category making, a given image of the world is understood as an intentional reality (Husserl 1922: 64–78), it is understood as human experience. Vis-à-vis the human consciousness – being under influence of language and culture – such image has at least partially relative validity.

In magical thinking similitude and contact have not only epistemological dimensions, where they function as elementary principles of cognition moreover they have their ontological dimensions: they are principles that direct the course of the world. These principles were first defined by anthropologists of the late nineteenth century. G. Frazer and M. Mauss formulated them as two laws: of similarity and of contact. According to the first law, all similar objects are ontologically identical; this means that the same phenomenon (object or a process) provokes the other, similar phenomenon and that there is a latent relationship of identity between these phenomena. According to the second law, the entities, or the objects that have met previously or have been adjacent to each other – directly or indirectly – are ontologically identical. Hence, the processes that effect one of the objects effect also the other one, even after their mutual contact had ceased (Frazer 1994: 18–19, Mauss 1973: 4–5). The law of similitude

can be considered a specific type of metaphorical relationship, whereas the law of contact can be viewed as a specific type of metonymic relationship (Jakobson 1989: 77–124; Burszta 1991; Buchowski 1986: 101–102; Buchowski 1993: 58–60). Unlike in conventional understandings of metaphor and metonymy, in these two laws similitude and contact do not function as mechanisms that only change the meanings of words (or of other signs) but as mechanisms that change course of the world.

The world that is controlled by magical thinking constitutes durable links between everything that is, in various respects, perceived as adjacent or similar. In that world, a part is understood as a totality (*pars pro toto*) and thus everything that affects the part effects also the totality (Mauss 1973: 82). Archaic cultures provide numerous examples of functioning of the laws of contact and similitude. For instance, a person can be harmed or destroyed by stepping on or by stabbing its shadow since shadow is inseparable from a person. By reflecting his or her contours, person's shadow is in lasting and durable contact with her. It means that a person can be harmed or killed through the "damage" done to her shadow or to any object that imitates that person. Such object, for instance photography, emulates the person and is therefore identical with her (Cassirer 1996: 62–63; Frazer 1994: 19–20). Both laws operate complementarily. For instance in the voodoo rites, the anthropomorphous figures (miniature human bodies that resemble the victims) are used to destroy the person. Such figures are made of fabric that was worn by a victim or contain her or his hair. The relationships of similarity and of contact between the figure and the person that it imitates and represents constitute an inseparable unity. This unity guarantees the success of a magician responsible for the destruction or harming of the victim (by penetrating the miniature with the needles, by burning it, etc.). The harm caused to the victim's replica is the harm to the victim himself – it causes him physical pain or death (see Cassirer 1996: 73–74; Mauss 1973: 82–83).

Numerous examples of human conduct that was motivated by the laws of magic can be found also in European folk culture. *Strzygoń*, which is Polish approximate equivalent to a vampire, was usually paralyzed by a piece of paper that was inserted under the tongue of the dead person and had a word *Jesus* written on it (Bartmiński 2007: 45). This logic can be explained with the help of the laws of magic: the name is connected (identical) with its bearer and thus the name guarantees the person's inseparable connection with Jesus who prevents him or her from a demonic semi-life of a vampire or a zombie. Therewith, *strzygoń* is annihilated forever. Similar magical thinking operated also in the 18th century Slovakia and elsewhere where the ill person was given a miniature picture of a saint to swallow it (Vanovičová 2005: 80). By consuming the picture,

the person was inseparably connected with the given saint and this link safeguarded the process of his getting well. The same laws can be found in the beliefs that were widely spread during the World War I, when most soldiers carried around the pictures of the saints, which were believed to effectively protect them from the enemies' bullets. In many parts of Central Europe there was also observed a habit of putting pictures of saints (mostly of Our Lady) to the coffin during burial (Simonides 1988: 137–138). It is possible to assume this practice originally established a permanent connection between the deceased person and the saint, which made easy his way to heaven. The Medieval and the Renaissance texts on *necromantia* – foretelling that was facilitated by the soul of a deceased persons – describe how these souls can be called back and disciplined when we use a piece of their body or a drop of their blood.² According to the law of contact, the person's soul is connected to the body even after her death. In other words: According to the *pars pro toto* principle, the control over person's body (or its part) facilitates the control over her soul (Bruno 2007: 8, 47; Lombardi 2004: 42–46). In magical image of the world, even a simple exchange of gifts is more relevant than how we perceive it today. Exchange of gifts establishes an inseparable link of identity between the parties involved in it. To give a gift to somebody means to unite with him by giving him a part of oneself. – By giving or accepting a gift, a stranger becomes one of us (Mauss 1999: 24, 87; Gurevič 1978: 171). Yet, magic has rarely become *metamagic*; it is rarely developed in a theoretical system which has the capacity to explain phenomena (Buchowski 1986: 105, 83–84). Magical conduct is always habitual and since it stems from tacit tradition, it requires neither explanation of its own mechanisms nor their theoretical objectification (Kowalski 1999: 16, 22–23; see also Eliade 1998: 11; Burszta 1986: 69–70; Lombardi 2004: 18–19, 130). Magical thinking was objectified for the first time through the scientific discourse of the late nineteenth century (Frazer 1994: 18–19; Mauss 1973: 4–5). The laws of magic were partly objectified in various religious and philosophical thoughts or in pre-Descartian natural science or medicine (Bruno 2007: 21–40; Foucault 2000: 33–73). For instance, the theory of reincarnation could be viewed as one of such objectifications of the laws of magic. It relies on a premise of similarity between a person and the cyclical course of the universe that operates according to the principle of eternal recurrence. In it, human life is isomorphic, e.g. it is structurally similar with the lunar, solar, and planetary cycles. All parts of the universe are adjacent and they constitute a unity that subdues to the same laws (Eliade 1998: 100; Gurevič 1978: 110; Libera 1997: 33).

The myth of the eternal return

In connection with the magical thinking, Pawluczuk (Pawluczuk 1991: 18) speaks of a *magical image of the world*. Such image can be simultaneously understood as a code (*langue*) that organizes our knowledge, ideas and experiences, and as all usual or habitual performances of that code (*paroles*). According to this concept, magical image of the world is a summary of all perceived phenomena and the space where they appear and are organized; only in this space, the questions and issues can be raised. In such order of things, some of them appear crucial and other insignificant yet, they are all connected through human consciousness (Foucault 2000: 13; Fulka 2004: 114).

Various alternatives of magical image of the world can be analyzed and reconstructed not only through the canonical studies of magic but also, as I would like to show in this study, through the archaic perception of world described by M. Eliade (Eliade 1998). I would like to interpret Eliade's phenomenology of religion as a theory of the magical image of world. This image differs spatially and temporally: it is determined by adjacent cultural differences and by a sequence of cultural differences. I would also like to show that the frequently criticized universalism of Eliade's theory, which is ascribed to his simplified comparisons of phenomena that are often detached from their otherwise incomparable cultural contexts, could be understood as the universalism of human cognitive presuppositions. Apparently, Eliade does not view his concept of cultural and religious universals that he developed in his *Myth of the Eternal Return* as categories of magical thinking. My import of these concepts in the theory of magical thinking may contradict his own theoretical ambitions, yet my trajectory is intentional.

Laws of magic permeate not only our conduct but also our pre-theoretical, everyday understanding of world and its objectifications. And it holds for archaic as well as European popular cultures. As has been mentioned earlier, the key category of the magical paradigm is the **recurring time**. An archaic desire to return to the mythical "*once*" or "*long ago*" manifests itself mainly in the denial of the linear (historical) time and plays a significant cognitive-motivational role in magical thinking. It can be argued that the attempt to escape the linear time, and the changes of the world that it inevitably entails, is an elementary form of categorization (of linguistic and cultural fixation and simplification of the infinitely changeable and diverse phenomena) and of magical thinking. If the time is a priori to all changes, then escape from temporality equals escape from instability (volatility) of the world and of all its substances. Subjective (ritual) undoing of time makes the world stable; it cancels out random and otherwise irretrievable transformations of reality.

In the world that is controlled by the sameness, all events are reduced to illusory changes, since any change can always be explained as manifestation of an atemporal cosmic cycle, as manifestation of an eternal matrix understood as an unchangeable essence of being (that is otherwise changeable and complex). Hence, being is barely graspable through the archaic mind. History is thus devoid of randomness, which means that history *per se* does not exist and that the entire course of life is an infinite manifestation of the extra-worldly archetypes (Eliade 1998: 106–152, 154). Obliteration of coincidence, which is uncontrollable and is connected with the linear time, and the reduction of a volatile event to a rigid pattern, which becomes our only reality, produces a stable and simplified image of reality. Our tendency to fixate and to simplify reality results from our inclination toward categorization (Durkheim – Mauss 1963; Douglas 2002). A desire of an archaic man or any man for that matter, to imitate the deeds of his gods and his (godly) ancestors is another manifestation of human need to categorize. Another manifestation of this tendency is desire of an archaic man – and not only his – to repeat something that has “always” been done or, from phenomenological perspective, something that has been done since the very beginning (Eliade 1998: 28–47). Eliadean *illud tempus* is simultaneous with the word “once” which represents radical past, e.g. an ultimate past that was not preceded by earlier events.³

The most radical forms of categorization are typical for archaic man. In his entire conscious acting, an archaic man does not acknowledge a single unknown act. Everything that an archaic person does had already been done. His life is an incessant repetition of the deeds that were initiated by somebody else (Eliade 1998: 13). By referring to J. Lotman, it can be argued that the strongest tendency toward the categorization is typical for cultures that don't have their own orthography, which are focused on the repetition instead of change (Lotman 1994: 19–30).

Ritual destruction of linear time, mentioned by M. Eliade, cancels out all changes that have occurred in the world since its initiation, meaning since the times when the world was at its ideal state. Through that ritual, the world returns to its ideal taxonomy or to a radical isomorphism. Radical isomorphism is the state when all of the world's elements are adjacent to, or are in a mutual **contact** with each other – they are all parts of a single whole. All parts of the universe are **similar** because they emulate that universe. The universe is reflected in its parts (Foucault 2000: 33–49; Guiraud 1974: 71–78; Kowalski 2000: 288–291; Kieckhefer 2001: 176–182; Libera 1997: 32, 45–46). A person is an imitation of the universe because she is inseparable from it. A person is also a continuation of that universe because, according to the law of contact, the person is identical with

the space to which she was born and which she inhabits (Gurevič 1978: 44–50). This can be found in the connection of medieval man and his territory (fatherland) – connection that is, indeed, incomprehensible nowadays (Gurevič 1978: 63). Such an intensive relationship between man and his home bears traces of the metonymic law of contact.

If we borrowed the term *monad* from Leibniz's philosophy we could argue that within the magical image of the world (which can be rather diverse), the world and all of its components (i.e. the states, the towns, the houses, and the people) operate as monads, which consist of ever smaller monads, each of them being a reflection of the other. Each monad is an *imago mundi* – an imitation of universe as a whole (Leibniz 1991). The ideal image of the magic world can also be viewed as an *ideal sympathy* when **everything is connected with everything through imitation** (Mauss 1973: 95–96). The core of magical taxonomy lies in its ability to imagine (create) the latent similarities (isomorphism) and the adjacencies (contacts) in the world; it further lies in its self-assertion that world operates as an ideal unity.

The tendency of archaic man to eliminate changes and to imitate the deeds of his gods and his godly ancestors (Eliade 1998: 32–33) is also the tendency to sustain the similitude (isomorphism) of the world, its integrity, and its safeguarding from the chaos. Chaos is without past and cannot be integrated in the universe. Chaos and the “innovations” cannot be imprisoned in any of the familiar categories since new phenomena do not imitate the old archetypes and this is a constant source of concerns for the bearers of the magical image of the world. It is also a source of fear of change and, ultimately, of time. Magical thinking is a radically categorical thinking that requires a transparent and controllable empirical and pragmatic experience of world.

Had a carrier of the magical image of the world not imitated his gods, his heroes, or his ancestors, and had he done *something else* instead, he would exclude himself from their ecumenical order, from the order of the universe and would become a *chaotic* element – an element of cognitively imperceptible and uncontrollable reality that is anti-worldly. Such a person would become a non-human entity, an ostracized demon (a being outside all known categories) who is dissimilar to and who can “contaminate” everything in his proximity (Douglas 2002; Eliade 1998: 18, 46). A carrier of the magical image of the world feels his obligation to eliminate demonic beings and to prevent his universe from a collapse into chaos – just as gods and heroic ancestors had prevented their universe *in illo tempore*. Imitation is the only possible way of conduct for an archaic man because it safeguards his ontological unity (based on the law of similitude) with his gods, his ancestors, and his humanness at all.⁴ The law of

similitude controls the entire human conduct and its subject-object relations: the Babel Tower had its archetypes in the astronomic constellations of stars (just as extra-mundane is the model of mundane and natural is the model of culture) (Eliade 1998: 16–18). Even as late as in the medieval ages, the temple is viewed as an imitation of universe (Gurevič 1978: 58). The tendency to imitate archetypes and to create harmony between the human and the cosmic attributes can be found in spiritual culture, i.e. in the magical concept of law. Voting, for example, cannot deliberately change such law. The only acceptable law is the habitual one that operates as an infinite imitation of the cosmic law and which is mediated to the community by its mythical ancestors. In the world controlled by the magical thinking, the adjustments to the existing laws are not considered authentic but are understood as more accurate imitations of an original pattern – its perfected restoration (Eliade 1998: 43; Gurevič 1978: 122–142). Stipulations that medieval rulers (enthroned through the will of God) used to issue were, in fact, the manifestations of “higher” will and of unchangeable, transcendental rules through which the God controlled the world. Wars, too, are perceived as continuations of, and are rationally justified as, archetypical struggle between good and evil gods or heroes (Eliade 1998: 40). Every mundane phenomenon has its transcendental and, above all, ideal and unchangeable (static) model in a sense of platonic idea (Eliade 1998: 15, 46) and, according to the laws of magic, it is identical with that model because it either imitates it or participates on it.

World's harmony, anticipation, and fate

Concept of history in the sense of the Old Testament prophets valorization of time (Eliade 1998: 117–121; Eliade 1994: 77; Gurevič 1978: 88) or in the sense of the Enlightenment project is alien not only to an archaic man but to anyone at least partially controlled by magical thinking. Magical and popular eschatology, according to which the course of the world is controlled by the extra-worldly patterns or by unambiguous scenarios, does not have a concept of future. Such thinking doesn't recognize future either as a possible (though not inevitable) transformation of world into an unknown state, or as “blind history”. These two concepts are cognitively unacceptable because they rule out the possibility of full categorization of history, of its full understanding “here” and “now”. The only categorically unambiguous future is the “end of the world” in its literary sense — e.g. a complete destruction of everything that has happened in the historical time and the return to the original paradise.

Hence, what is going to happen after the end of the world is in fact identical with the state at the beginning. In various forms of magical thinking, and with

respect to the "original state", any difference means deterioration of the past state and is therefore undesirable. The following cognitive explanation of this phenomenon can be made: if an unchangeable and a perfect idea (prototype) is epistemologically easier to grasp than an exceptional and a volatile phenomenon, then only those things in our present that replicate the past are epistemologically graspable and significant. Past exists only in a form of ideas that represent what is long gone. Anything that is "physically" absent, or that is present only through representation, can be categorized easier than our present. Since we lack empirical experience of our past, all differences pertaining to it are annihilated for the sake of the sameness and the repetition. The simplification of an infinitely diverse reality and of its modifications, and its reduction to a limited number of static prototypes is a fundamental principle of categorization. According to the law of similitude operating in the magical thinking, to understand an object means to identify it with its static and simplified prototype. To understand one's present and future means to identify it with its archetypical past that has been well categorized in mythical narratives and collective memory.

Hence, a perfect cosmos is inaccessible temporarily (things happened *long time ago*) and spatially (things are *remote*); since such cosmos is absent in our reality, its (im)perfection cannot be empirically verified. Cosmos that is too remote in space or in time, and that exists only as a representation of an ideal (prototype), is cognitively perfect precisely due to its absence in our present. On the other hand, the universe at hand is always imperfect because it is epistemologically less controllable and predictable. Our presence is always more chaotic than our past because it is immediately accessible to our empirical experience. Present is therefore always less perfect than past. A perfectly organized and easily graspable "original" universe is transformed into chaos by linear time – understood as a sequence of perceptible, relatively random and irreversible changes. Linear time is anti-categorical and therefore chaotic. The temporal linearity is eliminated by integration into a cosmic cycle of time or by return to the origins through the means of the ritualistic imitations of the alleged deeds of gods or ancestors; thus a person categorizes what would otherwise lay beyond graspable prototypes. Magical negation of the linear time cancels out the difference between the past and the future state of affairs; it simplifies and stabilizes the world and reduces it to eternal models (archetypes). In various modifications of magical thinking, a recurring nature of human history (birth, maturity, aging, and death of the world and of mankind) is an example of the tendency toward categorization. According to the laws of magic, this recurring nature is derived from directly observable planetary cycles, or daily and seasonal cycles (Eliade 1998: 100; Gurevič 1978: 110). Expressed in terms of cognitivism:

Observable natural cycles are standards of comparison and virtual cycle of human history is the target of comparison (Fife 1994: 19).

Undoubtedly, magical thinking has its own history ranging from the most intense forms of magic in the archaic cultures to its fragmented forms in contemporary folklores or in the global pop-culture; however, its cognitively motivated mechanisms seem to constitute the common sign of magical thinking. In this respect, we can speak of various forms of popular metaphysics, yet they all emphasize preservation, durability, and tendency toward categorization. Popular gnosis – which can be understood as a dualism between “this world” that is modifiable, transitory, and less significant, and the “other world”, which is durable, unique, real, and significant – is also a type of popular metaphysics (Pokorný 1986: 192–193). A. J. Gurevich notices that in medieval ages, when magical thinking was deeply integrated in the mentality of European population, heaven and hell were much more realistic than empirically perceptible “this world”. This was because due to the durable and unchangeable nature of these otherworldly spheres and entities (Gurevič 1978: 60). In the magical paradigm of medieval ages, a transparent idea was cognitively more “real” than a non-transparent empirically perceptible reality.

In the world controlled by magical thinking, phenomena were legitimized through their similitude with archetypical entities and events which existed *in illo tempore* (in a radical “past”), and which operated, as eternal matrixes, “beyond the world” (in the radical “distance”). **Magical thinking does not acknowledge coincidence or probability**, since everything that is happening is considered necessary and can be “explained” without delay. Present and future are but reflections of the past (Gurevič 1978: 79). Future is only a repetition of the past; it can be anticipated (and cognitively controlled) but only at the costs of total loss of its own autonomy. In other words, in the magical image of the world, future is transparently organized (categorized) but, at the same time, it is permeated by a determining and fatalistic belief that human decisions and deeds are insignificant for the world’s course which is already “programmed” (predestined) by the past events and cannot be altered. Vis-à-vis history, a man is not a subject but its object, it’s somehow “cosmic puppet” (Eliade 1998: 98–105; Uspenskij 1998: 48–49).

In the magical image of the world, the present state of affairs is a key to our future. World construed through magical thinking unfolds as an infinite continuity of its mutual relations and contact (i.e. neighbourhood), where everything is manifest through analogy or sameness. In such a world, everything resembles something that exists elsewhere: earth resembles heaven, whereas humans, animals, and plants are the reflections of the universe. If similar or

adjacent phenomena constitute an ontological unity, than one phenomenon relates to the other as its *sign*. In this sense, the world is a text that can be read and deciphered correctly and thus we can understand even things that are inaccessible to our immediate perception, particularly our future. In prophecy, future is deducted from the present state of affairs on the grounds of their contact and similitude (Foucault 2000: 33–49; Guiraud 1974: 71–78; Kowalski 2000: 288–291; Kieckhefer 2001: 31, 176–182).

A person can read her future from her palm that is identical with her, according to the law of contact, and from the lines that reflect person's future, according to the law of similitude. In Teschen Silesia, and elsewhere, the arrival of a comet – that chaotic (hybrid) “star with tail” – announced something similar to it – usually a plague, famine, or other mass catastrophe. It announced the upcoming collapse of cosmos in the chaos. The arrival of a stork, which is in Central Europe metonymically associated with spring when the vegetative (life) cycle started anew, signalled the upcoming life in a form of a newly born baby. In the world where things are mutually connected and imitated, there is nothing that could not be used for prophecy (Lombardi 2004: 107). Only in the world of magical thinking it can be argued that a person that was born under a certain star – and was in a contact with it at a crucial moment of her “origin”, will remain ontologically identical with it and her fate will imitate the constellations of that star. Person's future is thus dependent on the stars and their constellations; the future can be “read” from stars and its consequences can be mollified (Kieckhefer 2001: 134–140).

As has been mentioned above, magical thinking does not acknowledge coincidence or probability. Under the magical image of the world, everything is apparent and explicable. Every event has its obvious causes. It is usually a consequence of other subjects' acting, which means that someone or something can always be blamed for the present state. Everything has simple and obvious cause. In medieval Central Europe, cow's disease was not haphazard but was caused by the witches (see Evans-Pritchard 1976). Various misfortunes (or fortunes) that afflicted a man were but consequences of his past guilt (or good deeds) that returned to him since the events to which he subdues as objects are similar to the events that he caused in his past as subject. Everything can be blamed on someone or something that can be flawlessly identified (Kajfosz 2005: 96; Bužeková 2005, Kajfosz 2006: 29–30).

A tendency toward the categorization of reality, and toward its thorough organization and legitimization, is revealed not only through popular culture but also through popular (everyday) thinking which can instantly explain all aspects of our reality. Often, various “pop-ontologies” reign over the facts; they decide

which facts will be acknowledged as “evidence” that asserts particular worldview, which will be acknowledged as “neutral”, and which will be denied or discarded. The segregation of various facets of our reality, the elimination of its incomprehensible and unpredictable aspects, that means stabilization and simplification of reality, is typical not only for the processes of categorization but for the magical thinking as its radical form.

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¹ In Peirce's semiotics, the term *symbol* only remotely resembles symbols in Jung's psychology or in Eliade's phenomenology of religion; they have nothing in common but all of them are signs. It is a homonymic trap since in Jung or Eliade's theories symbol is a strongly motivated entity whereas in Peirce's theory of signs it is only an arbitrary (unmotivated) one. On the other hand, the iconic and index signs in Peirce's theory correspond with the term *symbol* in the phenomenology of religion. In other words, symbolic-archetypal relations are based on the similitude and contact.

² This motif appears e.g. in Tim Burton's movie *Sleepy Hollow* (1999). Popularity of relics is also based on the same magical principles. Obtaining part of saints body means getting his grace.

³ For instance, the following utterance: “The world used not to be as corrupt as it is today”, can be often heard during ethnographic research of the traditional communities in Teschen Silesia. The utterance refers to the *illud tempus* in a sense that it refers to the past that is completely static (identical with the beginning) and homogeneous. There are no other, consecutive pasts that would be diverse and pluralistic.

⁴ Here, the law of contact can be applied. For instance, medieval man was typical for his adherence to his family tree. The genealogical contact between a man and his heroic ancestors – which was often fabricated – is identical with their factual sameness. The ancestor's prestige from the victory over his enemy was, at the same time, a prestige for his offspring. In the medieval ages an answer to the question: “Who am I?” was the question: “Who were my ancestors?” (Gurevič 1978: 85; Le Goff 2007: 29).

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Magie, kategorizace a lidová metafyzika. Poznámky ke kognitivní teorii magie.

Cílem této práce je interpretovat magické myšlení jako výraznou snahu o kategorizaci, o zjednodušení nesmírné rozmanitosti reality a její modifikaci, redukci na omezený počet statických prototypů. Podobnost a dotyk (blízkost) jsou nejen klíčovými principy lidského poznávání; mají také ontologický rozměr, neboť ovlivňují podobu světa. Početné příklady lidského jednání motivovaného magickými zákonitostmi můžeme najít nejen v systémech a jejich součástech, popsaných v kanonických textech věnovaných náboženství (Frazer, Mauss) nebo v Eliadově fenomenologii náboženství, ale také v textech věnovaných evropské středověké a lidové kultuře (Gurevič) nebo současné lidové kultuře (astrologie, proroctví atd.). Různé aspekty magického myšlení, jako je cyklické vnímání času, imitace vzorů z „onoho světa“ nebo minulých událostí, mohou být popsány a vysvětleny prostřednictvím kognitivismu. Různé formy lidové metafyziky také vycházejí ze snah o kategorizaci. Pod tímto termínem rozumím tendenci eliminovat vše konkrétní a proměnlivé a zdůraznit vše obecné a stálé. Magické myšlení neuznává náhodu a pravděpodobnost, neboť vše je pokládáno za nutné a objasnitelné.

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